

SIMMONS' LOVE STORY

(Original) "Simmons, tell us a story." "What kind of a story?"

"A love story," put in one of the party, with a grin, while the others guffawed.

"I'll tell you a love story if you like," said Simmons soberly. The others looked at each other as if wondering what kind of a love story the romantic Simmons would concoct.

"Ten years ago," began Simmons—"leastways it was somewhere in the eighties—been' out of a job, I was movin' into Arizona. I was ridin' alone across the rollin' country, feelin' kind o' desolate like, for I hadn't no relatives except way back in Indiana, and the circumspection wasn't calculated to alleviate no sich feelin's, there bein' no shrubbery but cactus, which is no more affectionate than a porcupine.

"I was in the Apache country, and this set me to thinkin'. If there was a disturbance I didn't want to git into it on the wrong side. Apaches haint got no gratitude, and I preferred to cast my fortunes on t'other side. I jist dismounts and climbs the rise and when at the summit takes a peep through the cactus without bein' seen. Right down below was two wagons, with the stock and a family of whites behind 'em, backed by the rise I was on, while furder out was a small band of redskins—twenty or more, I reckon—crawlin' up on to 'em, firin' as they crawled.

"I goes down to my horse, unslinging two rifles, includin' all the ammunition I had—there was plenty of it—and goes back to the crest. The Injuns had scattered—deployed, as the sojers say—into a thin line curved like a bow so's to take the whites both center and on either flank."

"Simmons," interrupted one of the listeners, "do you call this a love story? I call it a fightin' yarn."

"The whites," continued Simmons imperturbably, "was pretty much flustered, for they never could tackle the Injuns comin' from sich different p'int. There was a middle aged man and a woman about the same age, and two young fellows about twenty and eighteen, a kid, a boy of twelve, and a gal. Every one of the half dozen of 'em had rifles in their hands, includin' the kid. The ole man was tellin' 'em not to fire till the Injuns got closer—I could hear every word he said—not to aim at the same savage and never to fire w/out bringin' down a man. He'd posted the gal on one extreme flank and the kid on the other, where there wasn't but one or two Injuns for each to watch. The Apaches wasn't firin' jist then; they was doin' some'n more turrable; they was a creepin', contractin' the line, as they came. When they got nigh the ole man fired and dropped a redskin. At this all the others fired, doin' damage, except the gal and the kid. Jist then the front line moved fore'ard and the two flank Injuns closed in rapid. It seemed to me time for the reserve to come in, so I dropped the flank Injun goin' for the gal, then turned to the one before the kid, which I sent back with a limp.

"Well, now, you'd oughter seen the way them Injuns picked up their ears and craned their necks to see where the shootin' came from. I knowed the smoke hung over where I was, for we hadn't no smokeless powder then, so I moved purty quick a dozen yards to the right and let fly again, but I didn't hurry, so I might bring down an Injun every time. The family below was equal astonished, but not a one of 'em dared take their eyes off'n the redskins to see what was up. I keeps movin' about behind the cactus, firin' as rapid as I could convenient, givin' the appearance of a line fifty yards from tip to tip. In less'n ten minutes I'd dropped five Injuns, and the family, havin' taken heart, dropped as many more. I counted ten left. Them ten drawed off outen range and held a powwow, lookin' up at the crest where I lay in the cactus, not wastin' no ammunition, therefore givin' no sign. After awhile, likely concludin' there warn't much force on the crest, they advanced ag'in, usin' their ponies for protection till they come within 200 yards, then made a dash for the wagons.

"Of course I couldn't tell which brought down the most of 'em, the family or me. All I knowed was that four of 'em dropped, remainin' remarkable quiet; two of 'em dragged themselves away; the other three put 'em on their ponies and galloped away."

The story teller ceased to speak, having apparently reached the end of his story.

"Well," said a listener, "didn't the family show no gratitude nor nothin'?"

"Didn't have no time. We was afraid of more Apaches and lit right out."

"But where does the love part come in?"

Simmons was evidently embarrassed. He took out a plug of tobacco and bit off a big piece.

"I tol' you it was to be a love story, didn't I?"

"Sure."

"Well, there warn't no time for love neither."

Simmons seemed restive under the laugh that followed, and one of his listeners, to help him out, asked a leading question:

"Did you travel with 'em long, Simmons?"

"Been travelin' with 'em ever since and been keepin' house with one on 'em—the gal." F. A. MITCHEL.

The Sphinx's Riddle.

The riddle which the sphinx propounded to the Thebans and the solution of which she made a condition of her withdrawal from the state was as follows: "What animal has one voice, at first four, then two and at last three feet?" (Edipus discovered the answer to be "man," who in infancy, from using his hands as well as his feet in walking, may be said to have four feet (all fours), in after life employs but two, and in old age to these he adds a staff, which may be reckoned a third. Upon this solution being given the sphinx is said to have thrown herself headlong from the citadel.

The Simple Life.

In my wanderings on foot when I walk through the provinces of Europe and talk to the people and fish and learn I find that what people lack most in life is simplicity, the poor man as well as the rich. It consists not in plain dress, but in plain living, in simplicity of heart, of personal beliefs and respect for the beliefs of others.—Rev. Charles Wagner.

Preparedness.

Begin the morning by saying to thyself, I shall meet the busybody, the ungrateful, arrogant, deceitful, envious and unsocial, but I, who have seen the nature of the good, that it is beautiful, and that of the bad, that it is ugly, can be injured by none of them.—Marcus Aurelius.

Cause For Sorrow.

Brown—Smith is down with brain fever. Green—You don't say so! Brown—Yes, the doctor says if he recovers his mind will be a blank. Green—Well, I'm sorry to hear that. He owes me \$10.

Spitfugal.

Kate—Do you think it's true that people catch anything through kissing? Madge—Oh, I don't think so. See how often you've been kissed and you've never caught anybody yet.

He who brings ridicule to bear against truth finds in his hand a blade without a hilt.—Lander.

Out of Man's Way.

"What the deuce are you doing on the top of that tree, Mike? Don't you know that it's being cut down?" Mike—Yes, your honor. The last time ye had a tree cut down it fell on top of me, and, begorra, O'll be safe this time!—London Tit-Bits.

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